

EIS SCOPING STATEMENT – BOERUM HILL ASSOCIATION

The Boerum Hill Association has always advocated for intelligent growth.

In the 90's our organization played a critical role in the Hoyt-Schermerhorn redevelopment that resulted in a rational separation of hi-rise construction and low-rise residences. Today 24-story buildings are rising on Livingston Street, 12-story buildings on Schermerhorn Street so the 4-story scale of State Street is neither overpowered nor obscured. This rational and respectful paradigm should be a continuing model for *all* development that touches brownstone Brooklyn.

As for the proposed 80 Flatbush development site, Boerum Hill's boundaries have always included the south side of Schermerhorn Street as our northern edge, therefore we consider this triangle of land, south of Schermerhorn Street, to be part of Boerum Hill NOT part of downtown. The clash of two Brooklyns, old and new, high and low, is brought into sharp focus at this location.

The proposed plan would bring super tall buildings to the same block as our 4-story residential brownstones. An increase of the FAR to 18 is unacceptable and the community should not be unduly burdened in the trade-off for the needed benefits. To allow this would be a violation of the rights of the adjacent homeowners who have invested so much in financial and emotional capital. Please don't mistake my attempt to communicate rationally as a lack of outrage on behalf of my neighbors and my neighborhood. We have worked diligently to preserve and protect Boerum Hill.

We believe the public has the right to know the total cost of construction, expected profits and clear disclosures of State and City support via tax abatements or infrastructure costs as a related to this development.

We recognize the need for elementary school seats. We know that the Kahlil Gibran School is in great need of an overhaul. We see the benefits of repurposed two historical buildings as community space especially if they support the arts.

However, the price is just too dear. Two towers, 74-stories and 38-stories, will simply dwarf the nearby buildings to the south. 4000 units of housing will be opening just to the west of this location with another potential 2000 units in the pipeline before Phase II is constructed.

Ironically, the proposed new 350 elementary school seats could be filled before the first tower is completed. Where is the second elementary school and the middle schools? Where is the green space? Yes, we need a lot of things – towers are NOT what we need.

Sincerely,
Howard Kolins
President
Boerum Hill Association

80 Flatbush Scoping issues:

Larger scoping area of 2640 feet or at least 1320 feet to encompass new housing, traffic and subway congestion in the area.

Indirect residential displacement – effect on market value of homes on 400 & 500 blocks of State Street.

Fire protection – access for Engine 226 down State Street and/or Third Avenue to Flatbush during construction and post construction in anticipation of construction lane closures and school buses on these streets in addition to current traffic load.

Public schools – enrollment and capacity issues should include the 4000 to 6000 units of housing coming on line or to be constructed in the next 3 to 5 years.

Open space – can this be broken down to separate plazas from green space? While Fort Greene park is to the northeast, Boerum Hill is lacking green space and greatly needs its own park.

Shadows and Reflections– this analysis should also look at any reflections from the glass towers.

Wind patterns – analysis of an already windy area and potential whistling from tall buildings.

Urban design should look at the obstructed view corridor of the iconic Williamsburg Savings Bank building from the west and the south. The proposed designs clash with the local urban design.

Water and sewer infrastructure needs to be considered in context of the 4000 to 6000 housing units coming to the study area.

Transportation issues: traffic, transit (surface and subway), pedestrians, vehicular and pedestrian safety, and parking should be considered over a study area of no less than a quarter mile due to the current load on all these areas. Currently the EIS mentions 18 intersections which are not identified and they should be spelled out. Again, the study area should be larger and look at more intersections and including the construction phases. (Where will the cranes be placed? Where will deliveries and supplies be staged? Which lanes will be closed and on what timetable?)

Pedestrian safety – any loading dock on State Street near a public school entrance and the tower's residential entrance will compromise pedestrian safety. No loading dock should be allowed on State Street.

Air quality – what steps will be undertaken to reduce dust during construction?

Noise – how will construction proceed on the new high school with the existing high school still in operation? We oppose any overnight and weekend construction.

Neighborhood character – “contribution to the neighborhood character” depends on which neighborhood is referenced, Flatbush towers or State Street brownstones. The brownstone character should be full weight in any review and not sacrificed to the downtown plan.

Affordable housing – With a potential oversupply of rental units in the area, some of the Phase I tower should include affordable housing.

Loading dock – any loading dock on State Street should not be allowed on that residential street.